

VZCZCXYZ0004  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAR #0153 0291233  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 291233Z JAN 08  
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6068

UNCLAS ACCRA 000153

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE PASS TO USTR FLORIE LISER, STATE PASS TO NSC PITTMAN,  
DEPT FOR AF/FO, AF/W AND AF/EPS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [OTRA](#) [GH](#)  
SUBJECT: GHANA - TRADE MINISTER ON FTA CONSULTATION

REF: USTR AGAMA -EMBASSY ACCRA E-MAILS 1-28-08

11. (SBU) Ghana's Minister for Trade, Industries, Private Sector Development and President's Special Initiatives, Joe Baidoo-Ansah met the Ambassador January 29 and raised the issue of a Ghana-U.S. FTA. The Minister is aware of USTR's desire to visit Ghana to discuss issues and a way forward in advance of the POTUS visit. He concurred with the Ambassador that a DVC to review technical and other matters of importance to the GOG would be an appropriate and sufficient mechanism to move the dialogue. Baidoo-Ansah had initially suggested that the DVC take place this week, but remembered that several key staff on his team are currently in Brussels, and that he wished to await their return and hold the DVC the week of February 3 (the time we understand USTR wanted to travel). The Minister shared with the Ambassador the questions regarding concerns that Ghana has regarding possible Free Trade Agreement with the United States. He indicated that Ghana has some basic concerns on which they need some greater clarity and assurance before they are prepared to pursue an FTA.

12. (SBU) The key points that Minister Baidoo-Ansah said he and his team would like to discuss with the USG via DVC are:

a) Given Ghana's status as a developing nation, the Minister wanted to know whether there would be developmental content in the agreement and, if so, what form it would take. The Minister said that for Ghana it is important to have a means to strengthen domestic industry, particularly infant industries. The left, he said, would be vocal and concerned about the prospect that nascent industry in Ghana will be stifled by an FTA.

b) The Minister would like more information on the level of liberalization that would be required of each side and whether there would be a transition period (as there is in the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union.

c) The Minister indicated concern about protection for AGOA eligible products, stating that it was imperative for AGOA products to be sacrosanct.

13. (SBU) Comment: The Minister did not expand on point c; however, the fact that he raised it suggests there may be a very large set of exceptions to the FTA, or that Ghana simply wishes to ensure that the United States does not use an FTA to erect new barriers to goods currently included under AGOA. A clear underlying concern for Ghana is ensuring that their efforts to start and nurture new industries and diversify their economy are not hamstrung by an FTA. There is also some political sensitivity regarding free trade. There was quite a bit of criticism of the EPA, even in its final form

which provides a lengthy transition period, from organizations such as the Third World Network. End comment.

¶4. (U) In anticipation of request, country clearance is denied.

BRIDGEWATER